

**MEMORANDUM**

**To** Board of Regents  
**From:** Board Office  
**Subject:** Preliminary Review of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School Strategic Plan Progress Report  
**Date:** November 5, 2001

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**Recommended Action:** Review the progress report.

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**Executive Summary:** The Board approved the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School's Strategic Plan for 1998-2002 at its May 1998 meeting. Since that time, the School has been actively involved in carrying out the plan. The IBSSS plan has three Key Result Areas (KRAs) -- quality and access in education, diversity, and finances.

The attached copy of the plan, pages 6-30, updates the benchmarks achieved from November 1999 through November 1, 2001. All November 2001 updates are underlined. Action steps and benchmarks have been added to the original plan, where necessary. In this year's report, a new benchmark has been added -- a re-evaluation of the computer software programs. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to assist the School in determining how best to provide quality services and access to education for students throughout Iowa who are blind or visually impaired.

The IBSSS Advisory Committee has reviewed the 1998-2002 strategic plan. The Committee did not suggest any modifications, but urged the Superintendent to continue to do what he could to forestall any more budget cuts.

Services provided by Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School are available to the approximately 400 students of the state who are blind or visually impaired, which also relates to the Board's diversity KRA.

Specific data on student and institutional achievements will be provided later, as part of the Annual Report on Performance Indicators.

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**Strategic Plan:** The School's Strategic Plan continues to be strongly influenced by both the Board's Strategic Plan and its performance indicators. The report provides a number of specific outcomes for students (from their Individual

Education Plans (IEPs) in indicators 10 and 11. The first KRA for Iowa Braille School is quality, which aligns with the first Board of Regent KRA, quality. The second IBSSS Key Result Area focuses on diversity, which matches another Board KRA. The third IBSSS Key Result Area addresses finances, which relates to the accountability KRA of the Board.

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**Background:**

The Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School is now in its fourth year of its 1998-2002 strategic plan. The Board approved the plan in May 1998, and since approved several modifications in the plan. As part of its mission, IBSSS continues to explore ways to work more closely with local school districts and area education agencies. To better serve students and their families, the School proposed, and the Board approved, a restructuring plan.

In 1999, IBSSS was reaccredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities, using a new Outcomes Assessment approach. This new approach emphasizes changes in student behaviors and learning rather than institutional resources (number of faculty and staff, classroom equipment, funding, and library holdings). As noted below, IBSSS is considering alternatives to this approach, considering the cost and human resource time needed to continue it.

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**Analysis:**

**KRA 1: Quality and Access**

Key Result Area 1, Quality and Access in Education, includes three initiatives. The three initiatives are: 1) focusing services; 2) outcomes endorsement; and 3) targeting technology. Initiative 1.1., Focusing Services, includes four strategies; described below.

**Initiative 1.1 Focusing Services**

**Strategy 1.1.1**

"Focus the Residential Option."

- This strategy was a primary emphasis during the first year of the 1998-2002 Strategic Plan. All of its benchmarks have been achieved.
- IBSSS is now participating in the Board's Organizational Review, Phase I. Specific recommendations based on the Organizational Review will be presented to the Board in Spring 2002.

**Strategy 1.1.2**

"Target Summer Programs."

- This strategy continues to be a major focus for the IBSSS staff, but the programs have been reduced in light of budget readjustments.
  - July 29-August 3: 18 students ages 9-16 participated in a sports camp.
  - 53 students received Extended Year Special Education (EYSE) services in the summer of 2001.

- 51 students received Orientation and Mobility services.
- 9 students completed a six-week summer program offered in collaboration with the Iowa Department of the Blind.
- 75 professionals, para-professionals, and parents attended the 2001 Summer Technology Program, an increase from 54 in Summer 2000.

- Due to budget restraints and a reduction in force, the summer programs will be reduced from two four-week sessions to two two-week sessions.

Strategy 1.1.3

"Provide Parent and Professional Development."

- This strategy is an on-going process at IBSSS.
- IBSSS is no longer offering course work from the University of Alabama (Birmingham).
- IBSSS, in partnership with the State Department of Education, has embarked on an innovative model of statewide professional development.

Strategy 1.1.4

"Continue to Develop Comprehensive Services to Students throughout Iowa."

- This is the primary focus of IBSSS for the remaining year of the Strategic Plan.
- The number of students served has increased dramatically, as the following table indicates. While the number of students on campus and the number of students statewide needing services have decreased, the numbers for FY 2002 are showing an increase.

**Iowa Students (Birth to Age 21) Served**

Year	# served on-campus	Total # Served
FY 96	53	392
FY 97	55	462
FY 98	45	485
FY 99	38	569
FY 00	36	609
FY 01	33	604

- IBSSS eliminated three consultant positions; it filled the State Consultant for Visual Impairment position.
- During 2000-2001, IBSSS began to conduct an early childhood study of the needs of children (birth through age 8) in Iowa who are blind or visually impaired including those with additional disabilities. The study will be completed in Summer 2002, with recommendations to the Board by November 2002.

### **Initiative 1.2 Outcomes Endorsement**

- Strategy 1.2.1 "Seek Outcomes Endorsement." Superintendent Thurman shared with the IBSSS Advisory Committee that the model described in the Strategic Plan would no longer be usable for accreditation because it was too staff intensive. With personnel reductions, there are not enough staff to be able to make the model work. IBSSS is in discussion with the North Central Association and the Iowa Department of Education regarding accreditation.

### **Initiative 1.3 Teaching Technology**

- Strategy 1.3.1 "Student Access to Technology."
- Between November 2001 and October 2002, model classrooms will be maintained and improvements will be made as new technologies become available.
- Strategy 1.3.2 "Learning and Curriculum."
- This strategy is assessed as Performance Indicator #10, the percentage of students with technology accessibility as part of their IEP.
  - During the 2000-01 Academic Year, 21 students at IBSSS had a technology goal associated with their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Forty-five technology goals were written for the students; 38% of the goals were accomplished.
- Strategy 1.3.3 "Training and Development."
- Phase I, the training of all staff to use Microsoft, has been completed.
  - Phase II, staff development of skills specific to their assignments, is underway.
- Strategy 1.3.4 "Computer Laboratory."
- Summer Technology Institute had an attendance of 75 teachers, parents, and para-professionals.
  - Action Step 1.3.4.1 will be replaced.
- Strategy 1.3.5 "Software."
- A new benchmark has been prepared.
  - A re-evaluation of the School's current software licensing program will be completed in October 2002.

**Key Result Area 2:  
Diversity**

**Initiative 2.1 Diversity**

- Strategy 2.1.1 "Review of Policies."
- This benchmark was met in April 1998.
- Strategy 2.1.2 "Modification and Implementation."
- An annual report is presented to the Board.
  - IBSSS' Affirmative Action Officer continues to serve on the Regent Committee on Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity.
- Strategy 2.1.3 "Supporting and Encouraging Diversity."
- 100% of staff have been notified to include a diversity statement in all written program materials and descriptions.
  - IBSSS has developed a Human Resources newsletter.

**Key Result Area 3:  
Finances**


**Initiative 3.1 Annual Budgeting**

- Strategy 3.1.1 "Use of Financial Resources."
- The Annual Comprehensive Fiscal Reports document actual versus budgeted performance.
  - IBSSS exceeded the Board's annual 2% of budget reallocation average.
  - IBSSS continues to cooperate with other Regent institutions to lower costs and improve services.
- Strategy 3.1.2 "Seeking Financial Support."
- Annually, IBSSS seeks external gifts and grants to complement the state appropriation.
  - Monthly reports of the dollar value of gifts and grants received are submitted to the Board Office.


**Performance  
Indicator Charts:**

The related Performance Indicators, especially Indicators #10 and #11, will be included in the Annual Report on Performance Indicators. It would be helpful next year to have more performance indicator data available as a part of this report.

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Charles R. Kniker

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Robert J. Barak

Iowa Braille  
AND SIGHT SAVING SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN  
1998-2002

November 1, 2001  
Progress Report

Purpose Statement

Our purpose is to enable Iowa's students  
who are blind or visually impaired to function as  
independently as possible in all aspects of life  
by providing appropriate educational  
opportunities, resources,  
and support services.

Staff of Iowa Braille

Approved by the Board of Regents 5/20/98  
Progress report approved 11/00

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## KEY RESULT AREA 1: QUALITY AND ACCESS IN EDUCATION

### Initiative 1.1: Focusing Services

#### **Strategy 1.1.1: Focus the Residential Option**

Staff will design a more focused residential program, to begin in the fall of the 98/99 school year, to meet the needs of those students whose primary disability is blindness, referred to the Iowa Braille School by the Area Education Agencies. Reducing the number of students on campus at any one time during the school year will allow the school to reallocate resources to serve a greater number of students throughout the twelve-month period. Shifting the focus to serving students on campus whose primary disability is blindness will also allow the school to reallocate resources to provide more comprehensive services to students attending their local area schools. From the school's general budget, 4.1% of the school's resources have shifted to support the shift in services. **November 1999 Progress Report:** All benchmarks have been achieved.

### November 2001 Progress Report

#### Action Step 1.1.1.1 (new)

Participate in the Board of Regents Organizational Audit.

#### Benchmarks from November 2001 - October 2002

A short-term, in-depth study of the selected areas from phase I will be completed by December 1, 2001.

Specific recommendations will be presented for the Board of Regents' consideration in the spring of 2002, resulting in greater efficiency and effectiveness

A long-term, in-depth study of selected areas from phase I will be completed by September 2002.

Specific recommendations will be presented for the Board of Regents' consideration in the fall of 2002, resulting in greater efficiency and effectiveness

#### Action Step 1.1.1.2 (new)

Begin an environmental assessment

#### Benchmarks from November 2001 - October 2002

Information will have been gathered from 75% of the AEA's by October 1, 2002

## **Strategy 1.1.2: Target Summer Programs**

### **Action Step 1.1.2.1:**

Staff will design and provide on-campus summer programs offered in two, four-week sessions beginning in June 1999.

#### **Benchmarks**

Sixty students will receive instruction on the campus of the Iowa Braille School during the summer, 1999.

Seventy-five students will receive instruction on the campus of the Iowa Braille School during the summer, 2000.

Ninety students will receive instruction on the campus of the Iowa Braille School during the summers 2001 and 2002.

## **November 2001 Progress Report**

The original 1998 plan set a goal of providing two, four-week summer sessions and eight, one-week periods of respite care. The Iowa Braille School staff designed and provided two reduced summer school sessions for the 2001 summer program. A three week program for older students served 37 youth from June 10 – June 29, 2001. Additionally, respite care was provided to nine students during this time. A three week program for younger students served 39 youth from July 8 – July 27, 2001. Also, a respite care program served an additional 5 students during this time frame.

A Sports Camp was designed and offer for a one week period from July 29 – August 3, 2001. A group of 18 ages students ages 9 - 16 attended the program and participated in variety of sporting activities including goal ball, track and field events, swimming, archery, tandem bicycling, and beep baseball.

Other summer programs offered by the Iowa Braille School included Extended Year Special Education (EYSE) services; Orientation to the World of Work (OWOW); and a summer Technology Institute.

A total of fifty-three students received EYSE in the summer of 2001. That number is up from forty-two students in the summer of 2000. Orientation and Mobility services were provided to fifty-one students and two students received services from a Teacher of the Visually Impaired.

Orientation to the World of Work was a six-week summer program offered in collaboration with the Iowa Department for the Blind and the Iowa Braille School. The program was housed on the campus of UNI. Nine students completed the program

The 2001 Summer Technology Program was attended by seventy-five professionals, para-professionals and parents. That number is up from fifty-four during the summer of 2002.

**Action Step 1.1.2.1 (revised)**

Staff will design and provide on-campus summer programs offered in two, three-week sessions beginning in June 2002.

**Benchmarks for November 2001 - October 2002**

Staff will design and provide on-campus summer programs. Due to budget restraints and a reduction in force the programs will be reduced from two, four-week sessions to two, three-week sessions. Extended Year Special Education services will be provided based on student IEP's. The following schedule guides the program planning:

- a) Staff will develop curriculum and instructional programs by March 1, 2002
- b) AEA's/LEA's, and parents are informed by April 1, 2002
- c) Extended Year Special Education plans are developed, where needed, by April 15, 2002
- d) Summer Programs implemented and carried out summer 2002
- e) Evaluation of programs completed by November 1, 2002
- f) Cycle begins again with curriculum and program development/revisions by March 1, 2003

90 students will receive instruction on the campus of the Iowa Braille School during the 2002 summer.

All students with an IEP requiring extended school year services will receive services.

### **Strategy 1.1.3: Provide Parent and Professional Development**

Staff will annually design and implement parent and professional development programs to support the needs of parents, professionals and paraprofessionals throughout the state, including staff at the Iowa Braille School. The programs will include information for parents, professionals in the field of visual impairment, and other groups of professionals such as school psychologists, social workers and school administrators.

#### **Action Step 1.1.3.1:**

The Iowa Braille School will schedule on-campus formal pre-service course work from the University of Alabama (Birmingham). The University of Alabama is presently teaching 7 courses during the 1999/00 school year at a cost to the school of \$40,690.00. The school is supporting the program with Phase III dollars, reallocations, and endowment as necessary. These courses will be repeated as necessary from August, 1998 through August, 2002.

#### **Benchmarks**

Twelve teachers will successfully complete the first cycle of six courses by September 1998.

A minimum of ten teachers or other professionals will complete all subsequent cycles.

#### **Action Step 1.1.3.2:**

Staff will design and implement in-service programs and workshops for parents and professionals conducted both on and off-campus, including the use of the ICN and the Internet. The schedule for this action step will be to:

- a) develop in-service program and schedule by January 30, 1999
- b) implement the in-service programs by March 15, 1999
- c) evaluate and modify on a continual basis through December 31, 2002

#### **Benchmarks**

Each program and workshop developed will be attended by a minimum of twelve participants, exclusive of staff from the Iowa Braille School.

## **November 2001 Progress Report**

#### **Action Step 1.1.3.1: University of Alabama course work**

The Iowa Braille School is no longer offering course work from the University of Alabama (Birmingham). Unfortunately, there is no professional preparation program being offered in Iowa. Although the universities did complete a white paper and a consultant did investigate how the three universities could collaborate to offer a program, there are no plans for a program in vision at this point in time.

**Action Step 1.1.3.2 (expanded and will be renumbered at 1.1.3.1 in the 2001-2002 plan)**

**Create Professional Staff Development Partnerships:**

Iowa has embarked on an innovative model of statewide professional development. Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School in partnership with the Department of Education developed a comprehensive system to provide a multi-faceted professional staff development program. Staff development is critical in the field of visual disabilities to keep up with research and promising practices but difficult to implement in a rural state such as Iowa.

This multi-faceted approach to professional staff development includes learning opportunities for administrators, teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs), certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS) and families through statewide conferences, resource materials, interactive sessions on the Iowa Communication Network, on-campus activities and biannual meetings of TVIs and COMS.

Professional staff development needs were identified by a state wide needs assessment of educational personnel. The identified areas of concern were assessments (functional vision, learning media, and expanded core curriculum content areas that include orientation and mobility), and current, on going eye care information. From these areas of concerns teacher outcomes were developed that could be linked to improved student learning.

A staff development team was chosen to represent stakeholders within the state. All professionals were apprised of their representative on the team and instructed to share concerns or needed information. The team was required to develop all state conferences utilizing results- based decision-making (Friedman, 1997) that incorporates promising practices and adult learning. All staff development must provide evidence that it improves student learning (performance measures). Forms were developed that incorporated all of the requirements in order to make the process easier. This is a new direction to staff development that was implemented through Iowa's Government Accountability Act (S.J. 1539).

Once the process had been aligned with performance measures professional staff development opportunities were identified. Learning opportunities for administrators began with *Educational Guidelines for Students with Visual Impairments* (NASDSE, 1999) training sessions that were held in June, 2001. Over 90% of all vision supervisors were in attendance. Building on their previous learning Quality Programs for Students with Visual Impairments (QPVI), (Toelle, 1995), a process of self-evaluation that leads to quality programming for all children and youth with visual impairments, was offered to all Area Educational Association (AEAs), summer 2001.

Conferences and workshops are typically held in the central part of the state for accessibility. Assessments were the focus of the 2000-01 school year. In addition to training the pertinent professional resources are also provided to participants (i.e., Jerry Johns' Reading Assessment & FVA kits). Iowa Braille

School has a well-developed professional lending library, but individual resource materials are distributed as part of the workshop as needed.

We are fortunate in Iowa to have a statewide fiber optic network with sites in all small towns as well as the metropolitan areas. This interactive communication network allows for two-way conferencing and sharing of ideas. Three afternoon sessions were conducted entitled "building learning communities for all children and youth with visual impairments." These sessions were conducted with educational personnel that serve children and youth with visual impairments. The purpose of these sessions was to identify areas of concern, celebrations, and barriers to quality service. From this process a "shared vision" for all children and youth with visual impairments was developed. A plan of action will be developed to address the identified concerns and barriers during the 2001-02 school year.

Iowa Braille provided on-campus professional activities throughout the school year that included Braille literacy and assistive technology. Biannual meetings for TVIs and COMS are part of the ongoing professional development. These meetings are hosted by the partnership but leadership is provided by various professionals within the state and included such activities as the Iowa Agenda (as part of the *National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youth with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities*) and make-and-take activities.

The effectiveness of such a partnership will take some time to measure. We must demonstrate increased learning and application by professionals, which in turn impacts improvement in student learning. Data collection has become a major issue for the state for all students with disabilities but especially for students with visual impairments. Iowa is a non-categorical state and most data can not be disaggregated according to a visual impairment. This is an exciting new challenge to demonstrate that staff development actually improves student learning, but Iowa is up to the challenge. Positive adult outcomes for all students with visual impairments should be the end result of all educational programming.

#### References

Friedman, M., 1997. *A guide to developing and using performance measures-in results-based budgeting*. The Finance Project, Washington, D.C.

Pugh, G.S. & Erin, J., (Eds.). (1999). *Blind and Visually Impaired Students: Educational Service Guidelines*. Watertown, MA: Perkins School for the Blind.

S.J. 1539, 2001

Toelle, N., 1995. *Quality programs for students with visual impairments*. Austin, TX.

#### Benchmarks: November 2001 - October 2002

Plan of action developed to address the identified concerns and barriers by July 2002 for implementation in the new five-year plan of 2002 - 2007.

The State Department of Education Iowa Result for Performance Measure is, "all children will be ready for and succeeding in school"

Quality Programs for Students with Visual Impairments (QPVI) offered in 75% of the AEAs during the 2001/2002 school year.

The following training opportunities will have been presented:

- ICN sessions, "Building Learning Communities"
- Conference on Outcomes/Transition as it applies to student learning
- Consultative / collaborative class for teacher licensure in Iowa
- Early childhood registry
- Early childhood work group
- Literacy for all children and youth with visual impairment
- Sensory-motor integration

As a result of the staff professional development programs:

- the percentage of children and youth with visual impairment that score at the competency level in reading, math, and sciences increases.
- the percentage of children and youth with visual impairment who complete core classes increases.
- the percentage of children and youth with visual impairment who graduate increases.

## **Strategy 1.1.4: Continue to Develop Comprehensive Services to Students throughout Iowa, in cooperation with area and local education agencies**

### **Action Step 1.1.4.1**

Pending the availability of funding, the Iowa Braille School will expand the outreach initiatives available to students, parents, and schools in western Iowa. The school will employ a staff member to coordinate current services in western Iowa and to coordinate the expansion of services.

The school will also identify additional staff time to provide transition services, work experience services, and services to students who have a visual impairment and multiple disabilities.

#### **Benchmarks**

Employ a staff member to coordinate current services in western Iowa by August 2000, depending on funding.

Complete a needs survey of students, families, and schools to determine service priorities by March 2001.

## **November 2001 Progress Report**

### **Action Step 1.1.4.1**

The request for funding for a coordinator position in western Iowa was denied. Therefore the plan was not implemented. A needs survey was not completed.

Currently we are serving in excess of 600 children in Iowa who are blind or visually impaired or who have multiple disabilities including a visual impairment. Data from the Performance Indicators for the Iowa Braille School documents the following numbers of students served on campus and the total number of students served throughout the state. Although the number of students served on campus has generally declined, the total number of students needing and receiving services statewide has increased dramatically:

<b>Students Birth to age 21</b>		
<b><u>Year:</u></b>	<b><u>#served on campus:</u></b>	<b><u>total # served:</u></b>
FY 96	53	392
FY 97	55	462
FY 98	45	485
FY 99	38	569
FY00	36	609
FY01	33	604

The school continues to serve students needing comprehensive services on campus. The school also continues to provide services to students enrolled in their local public schools. Because of the budget reductions and reductions in force, the school eliminated three



consultant positions created to better serve students throughout the state. The positions eliminated were the consultant for students with multiple disabilities; the consultant for independent living skills; and the consultant for early childhood.

The State Consultant for Visual Impairment position was filled in August of 2000. This position is providing statewide leadership activities that focus on services for children and youth who are blind, visually impaired, or who have multiple disabilities including a visual impairment. This state consultant is assisting others in understanding the needs of student with visual disabilities and how this may affect the quality of education for Iowa students. The position is a collaborative effort between the Iowa State Department of Education, Bureau of Children, Family and Community Services and the Iowa Braille School.

The Education Program Coordinator provides leadership and coordination for the Iowa Braille School on-campus and off-campus faculty. The Coordinator is responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services provided to students by the Iowa Braille School, both on campus and in their local area schools throughout Iowa.

During the 2000-2001 school year we began to conduct an early childhood study of the needs of children birth through age eight in Iowa who are blind or visually impaired including those with additional disabilities. The purpose of the study is to help determine what the Iowa Braille School's future role should be regarding services to this population.

The anticipated outcomes of the Early Childhood Study are:

- 1) The determination of the birth rate, number, distribution, age range, etiology of visual impairment and additional disabilities of preschool infants and toddlers in the state.
- 2) The determination of the present levels of service these children, and their families, receive from all sources.
- 3) The determination of needs for services for this population, with particular emphasis upon family needs.
- 4) A review of existing models of early childhood services throughout the United States and Canada.
- 5) A recommendation to the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, as to the Iowa Braille School's role in provision of services to this population

The task force appointed to conduct the Early Childhood Study has been working throughout the 2000/2001 school year. With collaboration from the University of Northern Iowa's Statistical Research Center, a survey instrument for parents was developed and distributed. Findings are being compiled. Focus groups for service providers have begun and will continue for AEA professionals. An early childhood center in Missouri has been visited.

**Action Step 1.1.4.1 (new)**

Complete the Early Childhood Study and make recommendations to the Board of Regents.

**Benchmarks for November 2001 - October 2002**

Early Childhood Study completed by July 1, 2002.

Recommendations to the Board of Regents by November 2002.

## **Initiative 1.2: Outcomes Endorsement**

### **Student Outcomes and MGT Performance Indicator #11:**

The MGT Performance Indicator #11, "Special School Student Outcomes," is reflected in the Iowa Braille School Outcomes Endorsement process. The Student Outcomes were developed as a part of the Outcomes Endorsement process. The Student Outcomes are measured within each student's Individual Education Program (IEP). The Student Outcomes will be manifest in all academic and life skills. The Student Outcomes identified by the Iowa Braille School include developing the ability to:

1. Maintain personal health and well-being
2. Communicate thoughts and feelings
3. Demonstrate independence and self-determination
4. Solve problems and make personal decisions
5. Develop interpersonal relationships and contribute to family, school and the community
6. Adapt to new circumstances

### **Strategy 1.2.1: Achieve Outcomes Endorsement and continue the cycle of endorsement**

#### **Action Step 1.2.1.1: 2000-01**

Continue with Phase III, gathering data from a needs assessment.

##### **Benchmark:**

The chairperson of our endorsement team will be identified by February 1, 2001.

#### **Action Step 1.2.1.2: 2000-01**

Using the school profile, identify one-to-two target goal areas for school improvement.

##### **Benchmarks:**

- Identify the target areas
- Peer Review Team Chairperson site visit
- Receive recommendations from the full Peer Review Team.
- Application for candidacy by May 31, 2001.

#### **Action Step 1.2.1.3: 2000-01**

Identify target area goals by December 1, 2001.

##### **Benchmark:**

Full team visit completed by December 1, 2001.

#### **Action Step 1.2.1.4: 2001-02**

Develop the School Improvement Plan.

##### **Benchmark:**

Strategies and timeline identified by March 1, 2002

#### **Action Step 1.2.1.5: 2002-2005**

Monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan and document student success.

**Benchmark:**

Each semester (2002-2005) document and publicize achievement of the goals

**Action Step 1.2.1.6: 2004-2005**

Host final visit of the Peer Review Team; submit of application to NCA for accreditation.

**Benchmark:**

Peer review team will reviews student progress; completes report for submission to NCA, by April 1, 2005.

## **November 2001 Progress Report**

We have not met the benchmarks for action steps 1, 2, or 3. This program is designed to be faculty driven. At this time, we anticipate that we will no longer continue the Outcomes Endorsement program for accreditation. This is due to the faculty and staff shortage we are experiencing following the budget reductions and reductions in positions. We are in discussion with the NCA and the State Department of Education regarding accreditation. We will continue discussions, attempting to design a program that we can accomplish with the reduced staff and reduced budget.

Initiative 1.2. has been revised:

**Initiative 1.2 Accreditation: Accreditation**

Strategy 1.2.1: Continue discussions with the NCA and the State Department of Education, to design an accreditation process that can be accomplished with reduced staff and reduced finances

**Action Step 1.2.1.1:**

Research and design a new accreditation format and implement a plan to achieve accreditation.

**Benchmarks for November 2001 - October 2002**

Complete a proposal and bring to the Advisory Committee by May 1, 2001

Seek approval by the Board by August 1, 2002

## **Initiative 1.3: Targeting Technology**

The Iowa Braille School's technology initiative is to provide all Iowa students who are blind or visually impaired with the technology, devices and competencies necessary to be active participants in the information society. There are six technology goals for students. They are:

1. Students will use technology as a tool for learning, for preparation for employment and for participating in society.
2. Technology will be integrated into all aspects of student life.
3. Students will use the network to access and interact with world-wide information through technology.
4. Technology will be used to facilitate integration into the community and increase interaction with others.
5. Students will develop ethical values with regard to the use of technology.
6. Students will use technology to create imaginative and innovative solutions to problems.

Five broad strategies have been developed to impact the attainment of student technology goals.

### **Strategy 1.3.1: Ensure that students have adequate and convenient access to technology**

#### **Action Step 1.3.1.1: Model Classrooms**

The school will have model classrooms where technology plays an integral role in the education of students who have visual disabilities. Computer stations will be networked and will have Internet access.

#### **Action Step 1.3.1.2: Technology Stations in Dormitories**

Student dormitories will have ten (10) technology stations with the same technology and access that is available in the model classrooms. Students will have access to the technology 24 hours a day, 5 days a week.

#### **Action Step 1.3.1.3: Computer Laboratory**

Students will have daily access to the computer lab at the Iowa Braille School.

**Action Step 1.3.1.4: Upgrade and Replacement Timetable**

All student computers in classrooms and dormitories will be upgraded in three years, or as appropriate. At five years, or as needed, computers will be traded for newer models.

**November 2001 Progress Report**

For action steps 1 – 4 above, all bench marks have all been completed.

**Action Step 1.3.1.1: Model Classrooms (updated)**

As new technologies become available, model classrooms will be maintained and improvements will be incorporated

**Benchmark:**

Between November 2001 and October 2002, maintenance and improvements will be made to classroom technology as advancements are available and appropriate

**Action Step 1.3.1.2: Upgrade and Replacement Timetable (renumbered and updated)**

Annually the equipment used by students will be evaluated.

**Benchmark:**

100% of the equipment used by students will be evaluated for upgrades and replacements in accordance with the school's hardware standards .

**Strategy 1.3.2: Learning and Curriculum (MGT Performance Indicator #10: % of students with technology accessibility as part of their IEP)**

**Action Step 1.3.2.1:** Technology will be incorporated into curricula and appropriate student learning activities. IEP's will incorporate the following:

- results of careful consideration of selection of technology;
- consideration of functional appropriateness for each student.

**Benchmark:**

Each student's IEP will include an evaluation of the student's technology needs and achievements.

**November 2001 Progress Report**

During the 00/01 school year there were 20 students enrolled at the school for whom a technology goal was appropriate for the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and who had completed four quarters of work on the technology goal. There were a total of 30 technology IEP goals written for the students. The percent of accomplishment was 56.6%.

**Action Step 1.3.2.1: (revised)** IEP's will incorporate skills for acquiring information, including the use of technological devices and services as appropriate for the student.

**Benchmark:**

75% of student technology related goals will be achieved by students who have completed four quarters of work on a technology goal during the 2001/2002 school year

### **Strategy 1.3.3: Training and Development**

**Action Step 1.3.3.1:** All Iowa Braille School staff will become highly skilled in the use of technology. Technology training for staff will occur in two phases: Phase I) Train all staff to use Microsoft; Phase II) Continuing individual professional development in the use of a variety of specific pieces of hardware and software

#### **November 2001 Progress Report**

Phase I has been completed. Phase II is an on-going method of continuous improvement for staff. Individuals have received training in the use of specific software as needs have been identified.

With a change in personnel effective in June of 2001 we look forward to new leadership and anticipate creating a new technology advisory committee.

**Action Step 1.3.3.1: (revised)** Shorter, more frequent training opportunities will be provided to staff, either individualized or in small group settings, based on need.

#### **Benchmark:**

50% of staff will participate in one or more learning opportunities during the course of the 2001-2002 school year.

**Action Step 1.3.3.2: (new)** Evaluators will determine specific training, as needed for identified staff to meet areas of need based on job responsibilities

#### **Benchmark:**

Identified needs will be prioritized and a plan to address needs will be designed and implemented during the 2001-2002 school year.

### **Strategy 1.3.4: Computer Lab:**

**Action Step 1.3.4.1: Create a Computer Lab for students who are blind or visually impaired.** The computer lab will provide training opportunities for students enrolled in their local schools and for students enrolled at the Iowa Braille School. The computer lab will also be used to train staff, families, and assistive technology teams.

#### **Benchmarks:**

Between 1997 and 2000, using the computer lab, training and support will be offered to a minimum of 20 parents per year including parents of students

enrolled in public schools and parents of students enrolled at the Iowa Braille School.

### **November 2001 Progress Report**

The Summer Technology Institute was attended by a total of 75 teachers, parents, and para-professionals. Action step 1.3.4.1 will be replaced. See the new step below.

**Action Step 1.3.4.1: (revised)** Create an email and web server including streaming video for students who are blind or visually impaired including those with additional disabilities.

**Benchmark:**

100% of students on campus will have available, an email account through the Iowa Braille School.

Student created projects will be available on the World Wide Web.

Teaching techniques created by faculty will be available on the web server via streaming video and other electronic means, i.e. electronic bulletin boards, PDF files, and video.

### **Strategy 1.3.5: Software:**

**Action Step 1.3.5.1: Managing software to ensure appropriate availability; licensing management; and support.** The software policy for the school will include criteria for: 1) selecting appropriate instructional design of software; 2) determining compatibility of the software with the instructional goals of the curriculum; 3) significantly improving instruction through the use of appropriate software; and 4) ensuring software use aligns with the school's vision, policies and procedures.

The school will write and implement a software policy; maintain a database of software owned by the school; create a software review instrument; and in-services to teachers on software use and evaluation.

**Benchmarks:**

By the end of the 97/98 school year, a software policy will be in place.

The software data base is currently in use and will be available for review throughout the life of the Technology Plan.

By the end of the 97/98 school year, the software review instrument will be developed and implemented.



### **November 2001 Progress Report**

Records of activities related to the above benchmarks are not available. A new benchmark has been written.

**Benchmark: (new, replacing the three old benchmarks listed above)**

A re-evaluation of the school's current software licensing program will be completed by October 2002.

## **KEY RESULT AREA 2: DIVERSITY**

Establish policies to encourage continuous improvement of the climate for diversity and ensure equal educational and employment opportunities.

**Initiative 2.1:** Reaffirm the Iowa Braille School's commitment to ensuring continuous improvement of the climate for diversity and ensure equal educational and employment opportunities.

### **Strategy 2.1.1: Review of Policies**

#### **Action Step 2.1.1.1:**

Collect and review peer group policies and practices relating to all issues of diversity, including public schools and schools for the blind by March 1, 1998.

#### **Benchmark:**

Information submitted to the Board of Regents by April 1, 1998.

#### **November 2001 Progress Report**

This benchmark was met 100% in April 1998. Action step 2.1.1.1 will be replaced in the 2001 – 2002.

### **Strategy 2.1.2: Modify and Implement Policies/Procedures**

#### **Action Step 2.1.2.1:**

By October 30 of each year, create, modify, and/or update policies and procedures related to diversity issues as necessary.

#### **Benchmark:**

Annual Affirmative Action Reports to the Board of Regents will document changes in policies and procedures.

#### **November 2001 Progress Report**

The Annual Affirmative Action Report is received by the Board of Regents in December 2001. The Iowa Braille School's Affirmative Action Officer continues to serve on the Regents' Committee on Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Current legal issues, current policies and current procedures and practices are reviewed in this committee.

### **Strategy 2.1.3: Support and Encourage Diversity**

#### **Action Step 2.1.3.1:**

Enhance the school climate to support and encourage diversity in our educational, employment and procurement programs. Specifically, at the start of each school year, give direction to all staff to continuously include attention to diversity issues in their planning and program development.

**Benchmark:**

By May 30, 1999, 100% of all written program and service materials will include a diversity statement.

100 % of all employment materials will continue to include appropriate statements and practices regarding equal opportunity, affirmative action employment practices.

**November 2001 Progress Report**

100% of staff have been notified to include a diversity statement in all written program materials and descriptions. We are using the statement of Notice of Nondiscrimination from our section 504 policy.

Currently 100% of all employment materials include statements regarding the practice of equal opportunity and affirmative action.

A Human Resources newsletter has been developed as a method of communicating with the staff of the Iowa Braille School. The newsletter periodically includes information related to the importance of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity and how the school supports this position.

This action step has been revised edited as follows in the 2001 – 2002 plan:

**Action step: 2.1.3.1**

Enhance the school climate to support and encourage diversity in our educational, employment and procurement programs.

**Benchmarks:**

Annually, at the start of each school year, all staff will have received reminders to continuously include attention to diversity issues in their planning and program development.

All written program and service materials will include a diversity statement

100% of all employment materials will continue to include appropriate statements and practices regarding equal opportunity, affirmative action employment practices.

The following action step is new in the 2001 – 2002 plan:

**Action step: 2.1.3.2**

Continue to recruit staff through local resource networks most likely to reach a diverse potential employment pool

**Benchmark:**

100% of all job postings will be posted at the Jane Boyd Center in Cedar Rapids and the Martin Luther King Center in Waterloo

## **KEY RESULT AREA 3: FINANCES**

Meet the objectives of the Board and the Iowa Braille School's strategic plans and provide effective stewardship of the school's state, federal, and private resources

### **Initiative 3.1: Obtain and maintain annual budgets sufficient to support the Iowa Braille School's strategic plan and initiatives**

#### **Strategy 3.1.1: Use of Financial Resources**

Maintain the confidence and support of the public by using existing financial resources efficiently and effectively.

##### **Action Step 3.1.1.1:**

Governance reports will be prepared accounting for the use of funds by the school as well as increased efficiency and effectiveness.

##### **Benchmark:**

The comprehensive annual fiscal report will continue to include 100 % of actual performance compared to budgeted intent.

#### **November 2001 Status Report**

The Annual Comprehensive Fiscal Reports are received annually by the Board in October which documents actual versus budgeted performance as well as examples of increased efficiencies and effectiveness.

In FY00, the position of Human Resources Specialist was added which resulted in the improvement of many HR operations during FY01.

The school continues its cooperative relationship with the other four regent institutions in sharing resources and expertise in many areas. We have worked closely with ISU in purchasing, facilities planning and management, internal audit, asbestos management, endowment management, environmental health & safety, campus security, as well as ISU transportation. Access to the university services and/or expertise continues to provide the school with opportunities to improve the flexibility, efficiency and accountability within the Regents system.

##### **Action Step 3.1.1.2:**

Participate, where appropriate, in Regent and/or statewide initiatives.

##### **Benchmark:**

Annual budgets will reflect participation in Regent and/or statewide budget initiatives.

**Action Step 3.1.1.3:**

Budgets will be prepared for consistency with Board and the school's policies and strategic plans as well as legislative intent of special appropriations.

**Benchmark:**

The budget will demonstrate annually a reallocation average of 2% general funds.

**November 2001 Status Report**

The annual governance reports for FY99, FY00 & FY01 have been prepared accounting for the use of funds by the school. The school's comprehensive annual fiscal reports for FY99, FY00 & FY01 compared actual revenues and expenditures with the Board-approved budgets, identified significant variances, highlighted strategic planning initiatives, summarized the actual uses of the funding increases, and discussed the school's accomplishments regarding measures taken to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Budgets have been prepared for consistency with Board and the school's policies and strategic plans as well as legislative intent of special appropriations. The school has exceeded the Board's annual 2% budget reallocation average. The primary strategic planning initiatives undertaken during FY01 through internal reallocations were as follows:

- Implementing the reorganization plan as approved by the Board in March 2000;
- Creating and implementing two statewide consultant positions for daily living skills and students with multiple disabilities;
- Addressing deferred maintenance.

During FY01, the school's administration spent countless hours agonizing over a spending reduction plan as a result of the devastating FY02 budget reductions. In addition to the approximate 6% FY02 base appropriation reduction of \$269,683, and a \$10,000 reduction in school technology funding, the state under-funded salary and health insurance increases by \$92,722. These reductions and shortfalls represent a total reduction of \$363,693 or 7.96% from our FY01 appropriation base. This is exclusive of the estimated \$62,698 increase in non-discretionary costs. The school lost many of its previous years' strategic planning initiatives (funded through internal reallocations) to the FY02 budget reduction. Our losses in statewide services alone included reduction of our summer school by two weeks as well as the elimination of three statewide consulting positions (Early Childhood, Daily Living Skills, and Multiple Disabilities) -- two of which were just created in FY01. This represents a devastating step backward in our previously, impressive progress on our Strategic Plan --- resulting in the deprivation of student access to vital educational opportunities.

**Strategy 3.1.2: Seeking Financial Support**

Seek appropriate support for all budgeting needs of the school, including external gifts and grants

**Action Step 3.1.2.1:**

Obtain state appropriations annually at a level appropriate to support the school's mission. And annually seek external gifts and grants to compliment the state appropriation.

**Benchmarks:**

Budget requests will be completed annually, per the State Board of Regents annual time table, sufficient to carry out the needs of the school's mission and strategic plan.

Monthly reports of the dollar value of gifts and grants received will be available to document an appropriate level of complimentary gifts and grants.

**November 2001 Status Report**

Annually, after factoring in internal reallocations, the school's budget requests are prepared at a level appropriate to carry out the needs of the school's mission and strategic plan. As a result of the devastating budget reduction/shortfall of FY02, the school's FY03 budget requests were twofold: to fully fund salaries and to restore necessary statewide services (including summer school and statewide consultative & technical services).

In light of the most recent state budget projections (October 2001), the school will most likely not be able to restore any of these necessary services, but will have to eliminate or cutback additional services. This will have a devastating impact on Iowa's visually-impaired students.

Annually, the school seeks external gifts and grants to compliment the state appropriation. The school pursued and received \$5,534 in Schools and Library Corporation funding (USF or e-rate funding) to help support our basic telephone service. The school was also awarded e-rate funding up to \$21,229 to replace our school's network services; however, these funds will be expended and reflected in our FY02 activity. The school is actively pursuing an increase in existing federal grant funds as well as other external funding.

Monthly reports of the dollar value of gifts and grants received are submitted to the Board Office to document an appropriate level of complimentary gifts and grants.